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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 088156

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/14/2018

TAGS: [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KFLO](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [AMGT](#) [CD](#)

SUBJECT: TFGG01: GEORGIA TASK FORCE SITUATION REPORT NO.

16

CLASSIFIED BY:HCHOLZER, S/ES-O, REASON 1.4(D)

RUSSIAN FORCES MOVE CLOSER TO CAPITAL

1. (U) A Russian convoy advanced to within 30 miles of Tbilisi, halting in Igoeti.

2. (U) Russian forces in Poti are destroying the port's equipment and infrastructure.

3. (SBU) Russian roadblocks are hindering the delivery of humanitarian relief supplies to South Ossetia and areas west of Tbilisi.

4. (SBU) Human Rights Watch reports Russian forces used cluster munitions in Ruisi.

5. (C) Georgia asked the United States and UK to send military technical experts to assess whether Ikander SS-26 missiles were used in Georgia.

MERKEL CALLS RUSSIAN ACTIONS DISPROPORTIONATE

6. (U) The chancellor called on Russian troops to withdraw from central Georgia.

¶7. (U) Medvedev said Russia respects the principle of territorial integrity but it is unlikely South Ossetia and Abkhazia will ever be able to live together with Georgia in one state.

CODEL BIDEN TO ARRIVE AUGUST 17, MORE VISITS PLANNED

¶8. (SBU) Senator Biden plans to arrive August 17. Senators Lieberman, Graham, Levin, and Lugar also are planning visits the week of August 18.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

¶9. (C) Embassy Yerevan reports Armenian officials are offended by President Saakashvili's repeated failure to return phone calls of support from President Sargsian.

¶10. (SBU) Lufthansa plans to resume flights to Tbilisi August 16.

HUMANITARIAN RELIEF EFFORTS; MILITARY UPDATE

¶11. (C) Twice-daily flights of U.S. C-130s delivering shelter and medical supplies to Tbilisi will continue until August 19. EUR/ACE will provide supplies for 14 additional flights. OFDA reports four DART members are in Tbilisi, with another six arriving August 16-17.

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¶12. (C) NAVFAC secured Turkish permission for the USCGC Dallas and USS McFaul into the straits on August 24 and August 25, respectively. Embassy Ankara is seeking expedited clearance for the vessels and command ship USS Mount Whitney.

¶13. (U) Minimize considered.
RICE